

4Testimony of Lynn DeYoung, RN  
Public Health Committee  
March 15, 2013

SB 968 An Act Concerning Reports of Nurse Staffing Levels

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Lynn DeYoung. I am a nurse at Rockville General Hospital. I am here today to support SB 968 An act concerning reports of nursing staffing levels.

I have been a bedside nurse at Rockville for 24 years. I have worked on Bissel 2 our medical surgical unit and in the ICU.

I have seen days with good staffing and bad. On a good day we are able to stay with patients who are a fall risk when they are out of their beds. On a good day we are able to give patients the proper education so they can go home and stay home. On good days we are able to catch errors before they happen. Unfortunately in my years as a nurse I would have to say I have seen far fewer good days than bad days. On a bad day, I move at breakneck speed from room to room. On a bad day we crisis manage. On a bad day patients die.

There is no amount of staffing that can prevent bad days from happening but we know that with better staffing there will be fewer bad days. At our hospital we do have a staffing matrix that is supposed to account for what the staffing levels will be but there is no input from the nurses on the floor as to what it should be. The matrix changes from time to time but we are not involved in the process of changing the matrix. We can tell you, and we often share with each other, but not with patients, if it is a good day or a bad day but we are not in the loop about how our hospital is living up to its planning and neither is the public.

As a nurse who has worked in a leadership position on my floor I can tell you that the staffing levels is information the hospital has access to and keeps track of. It would not be difficult for them to share that information and help us all be a part of creating more efficient and healthier systems for our patients.

I know you will hear testimony saying that staffing is a complicated mix of criteria including acuity and provider mix but the start of the conversation is always, how many nurses were working with how many patients.

I care deeply for each patient who is under my care. Nurses provide the most hands on care to patients during their stay in the hospital. I want the committee to know how important staffing is to patient care and how important it is to nurses across the state. Please support SB 968, it will help improve healthcare delivery for all of us but more importantly it will help the nurse on the floor do her job for the individual patient under her care.

Thank you for this opportunity